Rann of Kutch as biosphere reserve

284. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have identified the little Rann of Kutch in Gujarat as biosphere reserve;

(b) if so, whether it has been notified as biosphere reserve by the Government for proper development;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when it will be notified as biosphere reserve?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Government of India have identified Little Rann of Kutch as potential site for designation as Biosphere Reserve.

(b) to (d) A project proposal for designation of Biosphere Reserve is currently under examination of the State Government of Gujarat. Notification of the site as Biosphere Reserve depends on the recommendations of the State Government.

Construction of Port in Dahanu

285. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item in "The Times of India" dated 6th October, 1997 about the move of the Maharashtra Government to construct a port in Dahanu;

(b) if so, whether Dahanu with its rich marine and forest life and flourishing non-industrial economy falls in the CRZ-I category which translates into ban on industrialisation and urbanisation of the area due to its "fragile co-operation"; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government on the State Government's move?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The developmental activities of Dahanu Taluka are governed by the Dahanu notification dated 20-6-1991. The activities in coastal areas of Dahanu Taluka are also governed by the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification dated 19-2-1991. Some portions of this Coastal Zone are categorised as CRZ-I.

(c) As per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, Government has constituted Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority. The mandate of this Authority is to deal with environmental issues pertaining to Dahanu Taluka including Ports.

Destruction of Trees at Tilpat Firing Range

286. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news appeared in 'The Pioneer' dated May 5, 1998 that the Indian Air Force (IAF) has bulldozed a 520-acre wooded area at Tilpat firing range near Hindon Air Force Station, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) if so, reaction of Government to this environmental disaster as it has destroyed more than 14 lakh trees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Yes Sir, the Government is aware of the news item.

(b) As intimated by the Air Force authorities, it is incorrect that the Indian Air Force had bulldozed 520 acres area at Tilpat firing range and destroyed 14 lakh trees. Tilpat firing range encompasses an area of approximately 4000 acres. Tilpat range is Air Force land and was cleared of bushes and other vegetation in view of flight safety. Generally no bush or tree is allowed to grow in a firing range area as the vegetation attracts birds of all kinds. When aircrafts are involved in firing of weapons on a firing range such as Tilpat, they have to fly down to low heights at a high speed upto 1000 km. per hour and any birds in the area can be extremely hazardous to aircraft. This firing range was being sparingly used since 1989 and due to this lot of wild bushes have grown in the area.